A Dzogchen View of the Experience of Absence of Self (Anatman)

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Absence of Self

The Buddhist experience of Anatman can be viewed from and within the light of the of the Dzogchen tradition. Anatman is the essence of the earliest Buddhist teachings. Anatman is for many the foundational assumption of Buddhism. Anatman means the absence of self. For early Buddhism there is a profound absence of self in human beings. There is no self within a person and there is no self as a person. The human person is selfless. And there is no personal self as one's own Being and no Being as one's own personal self. There is no dimension of Being in early Buddhism. The human person is Being-less and Selfless. All phenomena is Being-less and selfless.

The Anatman experience seriously implies that human beings do not have self-agency and self-action. Everything is determined by context and by prior conditions called dependent arising. If there is no self who is the agent of experience, the agent of self-action, then prior conditions contextualizes experience completely. Without self- presence, self-agency does not exist and self-action does not exist? Self-determination does not exist. Everything is determined by the prior condition, the prior and preceding context. This is suffering.

The early Buddhist language of dependent arising was an ancient form of causality understood as systemic context and not as a causal action such as in self-intentionality or self-manifestation. Self-agency cannot exist without the self of the agent? Even the word karma is a function of context and conditions. One preceding momentary condition leads to the next succeeding momentary condition. All experience is completely conditioned.

A condition is the precondition for the next succeeding dependent arising condition. This is karma. And this is suffering.

So human self-agency can exist only in the wish fulfilling imagination! Such self-agency becomes a function of pretend! This is the pretension of ‘as if.’ Early Buddhist pretend ‘as if’ they have self- agency, ‘as if’ they have intentionality and ‘as if’ they have self-manifestation. They pretend ‘as if’ they can effect cessation! Can you be a Buddhist without self, and yet function with self-agency, self-manifestation, self-intentionality and with self-effectiveness?

For early Buddhism human beings do not have an actual sense of self and for those persons who say they experience a sense of self, Buddhists consider that such a person’s experience of self is an illusion or delusion.

When there is no embodiment of self, there is no possibility for the actuality of authentic self- experience. Without inner self, there is no true authentic experiencer and there is a corresponding absence of human authentic self-agency, authentic self-action and self-experience. Where there is no authentic self- experience there will be no authentic ethical expression in the infinite situations of human life. Prior conditions determine everything. Prior conditions determined the succeeding condition. The preceding condition, conditions and completely contextualizes the succeeding condition.

What remains is hollow humanness completely determined by prior conditions. This is suffering. There is no inner force within Buddhist systemic conditional causality. From the view of Dzogchen, in early Buddhism there is the complete absence of “luminous awareness” that is the actually of our essential humanness. There is no heart essence. For early Buddhism there is only the human mind that is a happen-stance sequence of mental functions. The mind knows things and beings. The mind knows forms.

In Dzogchen the knowing of luminous awareness is not the knowing of mind. The luminosity of awareness knows the luminosity of Being. This knowing of open awareness is foreclosed in early Buddhism just as the experiencing the ground of Being is foreclosed in early Buddhism. Only the mind knows, and the mind only knows empirically. The mind knows forms. The mind does not know Being.

Only the empirical mind exists in early Buddhism. The mind is of sensory perception, the mind is of empirical perceptions, and the mind is empirical reason. There is only the knowing of mind, and there is no knowingness of primordial awareness as self or primordial awareness as Being.

For early Buddhism there is only the knowing of mind alone, or better said the functions of the mind. In early Buddhism, there is no knowing of open awareness. There is no direct knowing of Being. There is no open awareness knowing our own Being or the Being of others. The mind knows beings but does not know the Being of beings.

There is no ontological base of experience, or no ontological source of experience in early Buddhism. There is no ontological dimension in early Buddhism. There is the suffering of profound ontological anxiety. There is the suffering of the absence of Being, and the suffering of the absence of self. This is Existential suffering.

In early Buddhism the actuality of self is absent as well as the actuality of Being. The mind knows phenomena but does not know the Being of phenomena. Buddhism knows the body, but does not know the Being of the body. Early Buddhism knows beings but cannot know the Being of the beings, including the Being of one's own being. This is the suffering of absence.

All phenomena is baseless and being-less and selfless The human sense of self and human sense of agency is a baseless Being-less phenomena of a baseless Being-less being. Personal psychology is without base, without Being, without presence. There is only this ontic dimension of phenomena to use the language of phenomenology. There is no ontological dimension of phenomena to be experienced in early Buddhism. There is no Being of phenomena. The mind only knows the ontic experience. The ontic experience is the experience of thingness and the experience of form alone.

This is how early Buddhism understood the emptiness of experience, the emptiness of self and the emptiness of Being. This emptiness is not the emptiness of the potential space of the Dharmakaya .This emptiness is simply the existential emptiness of lack. This emptiness of lack is the emptiness of non- being, non self. This is the emptiness of absence.

The only knowing for early Buddhism was the knowing of the empirical based mind. Our sense of mind is our sense of the mental aggregates in the confluence of the moment. This is a materialistic phenomenology and a form of materialistic knowing of fragmented human beings.

In phenomenological terms there is an ontic phenomenology and there is no ontological dimension of our existence. What you see with your mind alone is what you get. Buddha or Gotama would speak of the anguish both of the lack of something external, and the anguish of lack of something internal. Human beings suffer from non self, and they suffer from the inner vacuum of selflessness, and they suffer from the absence of embodied Being. This absence of self is the absence of the experience of one's own Being. Without the embodied sense of self as our Being or the embodied sense of Being as our self we suffer from this pervasive loss of Being. We suffer from nothingness. We suffer from absence, we suffer from emptiness, we suffer unending melancholia. We suffer from the lack of self-efficacy.

In early Buddhism the world was things and thingness. The world was reified. Humans are empty things. We are empty human things. The world is empty entities. To be a human being is to be an empty entity. Entities are things with form and shape. Things are entities with form and shape. Other than entities there is only nothingness and the emptiness of nothingness. Entities are empty of Being.

Early Buddhism declares there is no substance to beings and no substance to phenomena and there is only emptiness. This emptiness of early Buddhism is the emptiness of Being, the absence of the experience of Being, absence of the base of Being. This emptiness is the absence of the presence of Being, which is the absence of the inner experience of Presence.

In Dzogchen our experience of presence within our self and presence within another, is our experience of self. Our sense of self is our sense of Being and our self is our presence of Being in us 'as us.' In Dzogchen being a human being is experiencing our Being-ness of Presence. The sense of presence is the sense of luminous Being. The sense of presence is the sense of our Being as our self. Being is not known through mind alone. Being is known only through the knowing-ness of awareness. The

knowing-ness of awareness is knowing the source of our innate self as Being.

In early Buddhism, without our sense of presence, without the sense of our own Being, without our sense of self agency, what we are now is what we were conditioned from the preceding past condition and the preceding moments condition to the succeeding moment. At the moment of death, the quality of the last consciousness condition, may be followed by the arising of the rebirth of consciousness. Nothing is carried over, absolutely nothing is carried over, there is no continuity of Being. The new consciousness arises in dependence on the previous consciousness as a condition for the dependent arising of the new consciousness. There is no continuity in this fragmented and fragmenting view of human experience. The early Buddhist experience of being human is incomplete. This is a source of suffering.

In early Buddhism, even when a person senses self and self-agency, this is considered an illusionary experience. In the light of dependent arising, what is arising whatever is manifesting is a function of the previous condition. Truly, one thing follows after another thing. One circumstance follows after another circumstance. One condition follows after a prior condition.

This view of causality is not the causality of intentional force, or the dynamic force of self-manifestation, or the force of self-action but the systemic contextualization, a systemic condition conditions the next dependent arising of a condition. There is no presence of self, and no presence of our self as our human Being-ness.

Psychological Absence

This absence of self is not simply a psychological absence of self. This absence of self is not simply and emotional or affective absence of self. This absence of self is not simply a cognitive absence of self. The absence of self is not simply the lack of psychological mindedness. This absence of self is not simply that our self has withdrawn deeply within into a schizoid like state.

This is an ontological absence of self, the absence of self as Being and so then authentic self-action in the world is impossible. Without ontological

self- agency, authentic self-direction cannot manifest. Self- action cannot manifest within the absence of the ontological structure of self, the ontological absence of self. The ontological absence of self is prior to the absence of our psychological sense of self. The Being of our mind and Being of our thoughts and Being of our affects is absent. In early Buddhism there is only absence.

Early Buddhism thought that most people think that their mind is their self. People even today, think their mind is their self. Most people think there mind is their self. They think their mind is an entity. But for early Buddhist the mind is not self. Their mind is not an entity. In early Buddhism there is no base of Being and there is no base of being for and of the mind. There is no Being-ness of mind. The mind without Being-ness is empty of being. There is no ontological source of our mind and no ongoing continuity of mind. There is no open awareness as self. There is no open awareness of self- presence. There is no open awareness of our Being as our self.

Authentic self- action cannot arise from within the absence of the inner heart essence of awareness. In Dzogchen, the inner heart essence of awareness is the source of awareness as the knower of Being within our self, the knower of Being in others and the knower of Being as the universe.

Self-Negation

The early Buddhist deification of absence of self, negates the human power of creative self-manifestation and our human power of ethical action and ethical protection. The absence of self-negates presence. In Dzogchen Presence is not simply a psychological event, but our human Presence is the self-manifestation of Being ‘as us’ and ‘us’ as our embodied awareness. Presence is the self-manifestation of ground of Being as our own awareness. Presence is the self-manifestation of the Pure Presence of Dharmakaya. The Dharmakaya is Pure Being which is not a being and which manifest infinite numbers of beings. In Dzogchen our psychological mind is the manifestation of Being. Our mind exists within the context of our presence, which is the presence of Being.

Sea Of Passivity

An ethical realm of a sea of passivity is created by anatman thinking. For the early Buddhist human events happen relentlessly as a function of the infinity of dependent origination and dependence of self-arising conditions. Ultimately, within this view of anatman, the human action is non action. The Virtue of Non Action or doing nothing is actually the felt sense of non self. This sense of non-doing is the sense of sensation of the aggregates of our mind. The mind has no agency. The word acceptance is a kind of going along, and is a kind of getting along, is it not?

Early Buddhist think that we think our mind is our self, and we are a series of mind functions coalescing bringing forth the ideation of self. There is no ontological foundation to this ideational experience. In fact early Buddhism had no sense of ontological foundation of any phenomena. There was no ontological base of phenomena or ontological basis of mind. The only base was circumstantial material mental conditions.

Phenomenological Dzogchen

In the language of phenomenological Dzogchen, there is Being. Being which is not a Being manifests infinite numbers of beings. In phenomenological Dzogchen as human beings we experience the ontic level of experience and as human beings we also experience the ontological level of experience. This is simultaneous experience. We can actually experience beings and Being. There is the experiential level of things and forms which is our ontic level of empirical experience. This knowledge is empirical sense knowledge. For the early Buddhist there is only this knowing of mind and there is no direct knowing of luminous open awareness which is the doorway to experiencing primordial knowing as primordial Being.

In Dzogchen our direct knowing of luminous open awareness is our doorway to experiencing primordial knowing as primordial Being. In the Dzogchen view we have the experience of our awareness knowing Being. Being is the ontological level of experience. We can know the Being of our own being and the Being of others beings. We can know the being of phenomena and we can know the phenomena of Being within us ‘as us’. This is Bliss. This is the Bliss of Being that overcomes suffering. We are the intertwining of mind and Being. This intertwining brings forth the experience

of self as embodied Being. In Dzogchen, our sense of our embodied Being is our sense of self. Our sense of our self is our ongoing sense of our embodied Being.

The Dzogchen View of Absence of Self

Dzogchen has a particular and unique view of the absence of self. This Dzogchen view of absence of self is similar to the contemporary views of continental phenomenology and existential phenomenological psychology. From our Dzogchen view the absence of the sense of self is the absence of the sense of Being. The absence of the sense of Being is the absence of the sense of self. Within the direct understanding of Dzogchen, human beings experience an unfolding sense of inner most self which is the unfolding experience of our sense of Being and the unfolding and deepening of the sense of our Being-ness of Being. ‘Just as I am.’ Or Just ‘as it is.’ This is our inner luminous human heart essence experience. In contemporary existential psychoanalysis Donald Winnicott describes the child’s developing sense of self as the development of a sense ongoing continuity of Being.

Onto-Cosmological Experience of Self

Dzogchen presents an onto-cosmological experience of self. The sense of self is convergent with our sense of Being and our sense of Being is convergent with our sense of Self. Our self-manifestation of action is the self-manifestation of our luminous Being in the world. Self-agency is within the luminous realm of the immanence of self-manifestation of our own Being’s personal dramatic action of self-manifestation in this world. Desire itself is the self- arising of our self-manifestation in the world. Our felt sense of self, manifests desire as a way of being in the world and bringing forth the world. As Jacque Lacan once said when speaking at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, “Desire brings forth Baltimore! “

Our Self Is Our Felt Sense of Our Personal Embodiment of Being

In the Dzogchen view the sense of self is not a concept of mind or mental image of self. The sense of self is not a conceptual event. The sense of our self is not sense of self as a thing like an object that inhabits us. Our self is not empty and thing like as some suggest. By empty here in this context, empty is nothing, empty as lack, empty as absence.

Our self is not made of reified thing-ness, like the Tin Man in the Wizard of Oz. Yet the absence of self is hollow of the heart essence, Snying Po. Our beloved innermost awareness as self is not the random happen stance of the mental aggregates of mind's thingness. The mental Buddhist mind of aggregates is a Tin mind of a hollow tin person. Without open awareness as self, there is no personhood. Open awareness is primordial knowing-ness manifesting as our own awareness.

Our sense of self is neither thing-ness nor entity, and neither is being absolutely vacant, or absolutely lacking or hollow. Being is neither being a thing, or being an entity or being absolute nothingness. Awareness is not a thing, and awareness is not an entity. Awareness is not non Being-ness, awareness is not the absence of Being. Awareness is no-thingness; awareness is direct knowing-ness; awareness is gnosis; awareness is jnana. Open awareness is our opening to Being.

The dilemma is that if we are in mind alone, we may not understand what has just been worded. Awareness is not a thing, awareness is not nothing . Awareness is Being and the knowing of Being. Awareness is no- thingness that knows Being. Our awareness is not a thing. Our knowingness is no-thingness. Our awareness is the knowingness of our Being.

Who-ness and Sense of Self

Our sense of self is not an illusion of who-ness. Our who-ness is the knowingness of open awareness, open knowingness, the openness of Being as our own luminous singularity. Awareness knows Being and Being's knowing is Awareness. There is the knowing of mind and there is pristine knowing of awareness.

We are one knower with two ways of knowing. These two ways of knowing are very distinct. Our mind knows form and our awareness knows Being. Our mind knows beings and our awareness knows Being. Our mind knows the ontic and our awareness knows the ontological. Our mind knows time and our awareness knows timelessness.

Our felt sense of self is the actuality of our Being in the world and the manifestation of our Being's presence in the world. The world itself is multidimensional. The world itself is a self-manifestation of Being 'just as we are,' a self-manifestation of Being. Being is not a being, and Being self-manifests infinite numbers of beings. Being self- manifests infinite worlds and infinite numbers of inhabitants of the worlds.

Presence of Our Being

Our personal Being is the presence of our Being as the Being of the world. You and I are the self-manifestation of Being in the world as human beings. You and I are the inner heart essence of pure awareness, luminous radiance of Being. Our self is our ongoing continuity of luminous Being, life after life and death after death.

The Difference between Metaphysics and Ontology

Our mind knows metaphysics. Our mind knows conceptualization about Being and beings. Our mind knows ideation. Our mind knows through thoughts, affects, and sensation. Our awareness knows ontology. Our awareness directly knows the experience of Being as Being. Experiencing Being and understanding our experience of Being is Ontology. Thinking about Being is metaphysical. Phenomenology is an ontological experience of direct knowing of the given-ness of Being, and the Being of phenomena.

In this way phenomenological ontology and Dzogchen are similar in understanding the sense of self as the sense of our Being. Mind will think about self as a thing. Awareness understands the experience of Being as my experience of Being, my self- experience of Being. My experience of my Being is my experience of the sense of My-self. My sense of My-self is my experience of my Being.

Embodiment of Buddha Nature in Light of Dzogchen

We understand Buddha-nature from within the Dzogchen perspective. Buddha nature is spontaneous presence, spontaneous, un-fabricated qualities of direct knowingness, spaciousness, energy, luminosity, compassion, and a bliss that cannot be reified. Our mind's knowingness of form can be integrated within our embodied sense of self, our embodied awareness, our embodied field of Being, our embodied field of knowingness without becoming reified.

Buddha nature is luminous primordial knowing, the original ground of Being, the actual all ground to use Longchenpa's language. Buddha nature is the Nature of Being. Being is not a being, but Being manifests infinite numbers of beings. Buddha nature is the nature of Being and Being is the Buddha nature. Buddha is not a person.

Our sense of self is our sense of our Being-ness of our Being. Being cannot be reified within the knowingness of our awareness field. Our Being to use the language of Dzogchen is our Buddha Nature. Buddha nature is the indivisibility of open awareness; its expanse (dbyings); its luminosity and its foundational openness of primordial knowingness (Yeshe).

Longchenpa Understanding of the Onto-Cosmological Self

Longchenpa's writes how open awareness is (Rigpa) and how Rigpa knowingness opens primordial knowing as Yeshe. Yeshe is the expressive and embodied dimension of primordial knowing. Being is primordial knowing. Primordial knowing manifests as our Presence and as the natural luminosity that pervades our embodiment and our mind.

Longchenpa makes clearly evident that our inherent spiritual potential is completely and already primordially present within us. Longchenpa describes the Dzogchen understanding that this spiritual quintessence is spontaneously, naturally present, and embodied in us lacking none of its inborn qualities. This constitutes the ground of our Being where radiance

manifests like the shining sun. Dzogchen is a path of immanence. Dzogchen is the path of completeness. Dzogchen is the path of Being.

Meditation as Becoming Aware of Being

Of course meditation is our becoming aware of our awareness is a clearing process that reveals our abiding nature of primordial awareness which is the simple taking place of presence. Presence is an in invariant structure, the absolute flow of Being. This pre-reflective consciousness is the presence of our Being as Being itself. This presence of embodied Being is our embodied sense of self. To experience Buddha nature is to experience our self. Our sense of self is our sense of Being, and our sense of Being is our Buddha nature. Our awareness is jnana and our awareness is gnosis. And within our awareness we directly experience our self, our Being, and our Being is the Buddha dimension of wisdom gnosis. This is true of everyone 'just as they are.'

" *Mineness"of Our Self Experience of Being .*

Using the understanding of the contemporary phenomenology of Michel Henri our self refers to our self-experience, which is intrinsically related to the experience of our self and the experience of our Being as our self within our self.

The experience of our self is the manifestation of "Mineness." Mineness is our experiences being experienced by the first person given-ness which reveals our experience as our own. Michel Henry call this ipseity. This experience itself is not an experience that creates the self, the self is not a psychological entity. Rather the sense of self is the singular manifestation of Being as us. The experience of self is the experience of our own Being.

We directly experience our phenomenological understanding of our self. Our self does not refer to a public identity, our self does not refer to a thing, our self refers to the matter of experience. Experience is my experience, experience is always mine. The self is not a thing such as a psychological mind, or a function of mind. Our self is our language or our signifier in

which appearance appears to itself as itself. Our appearance manifests itself to itself. This is also true of our language such as the Dzogchen language of heart essence. This wording is the language of my human experience of Being-ness appearing and manifesting as my experience.

Our language of self is completely self-referential and our self is not simply a concept of mental intentionality, or a mental cognition or mental ideation. Neither is our self-subjectivity that is intrinsically bound to an object.

Our self is our Being revealing our-self to our-self. For Michel Henry our language of our “Mineness” of experience, our enowning of experience reflects our self-referential structuring of our experience of Being. Our Existence is our personal Being-ness in self- manifestation as us to us. Our ongoing continuity of Being is our personhood. To experience our self does not mean I experience a thing that is called our self, but that my personal experience of my Being appears to me. This appearing, this manifestation happens within my first person perspective. Our Self is the self- given-ness of our Being and this self-given-ness of our Being symbolizes that our Being is self-manifesting as our own Being . This self-manifestation of our own Being is the lucidity of the actuality of appearance of our Being and the luminosity of our experience of our Being.

This experience of our Being is intrinsic and is not be an object of our mind’s observation. This is not an external object that appears but rather there is the appearing of our inner most awareness. This is the appearing of my Being itself as my-self. The self is not an object, but the personalization of Being itself in time and in this innate dimension of personal-ness. Primordial awareness, primordial knowingness is completely personal, and is completely the immanence of existing-ness. This is not transcendental, or impersonal, or non- personal whatsoever. There is no dissociation, there is no distant.

To lose the sense of the personal within our-self or within the self of another, is to lose the beatific-ness of Being’s self-manifestation as us, as you and as I.

As Michel Henri describes the self is immanent and not a transcendental experience. The experience of self is within the realm of immanence and of course is the source of authenticity. Authenticity is the experience of immanence.

This discussion of “Mineness” of Michel Henri reflects Michel Henri’s great text ‘The Essence of Manifestation’. This discussion also reflects the reflection on Michel Henri’s work by Dan Zahavi in his text ‘Subjectivity and Selfhood, Investigating the First Person Perspective.’ Mit Press 2008. This discussion on Michel Henri work also reflects the work of Rudd Welten, ‘Authenticity-The View from Within,’ published in the International Journal of Philosophy and Theology71 (2010).

Immanence of Self and Authenticity of Self

The experience of our self is completely immanent in contrast to the transcendent experience of Pure Being. Our experience of self is immanent within the field of Being and our authentic experiencing of our own self manifestation is liberation just as we are. Self- liberation in the realm of immanence is the experience of the authenticity of our self-manifestation that we cannot be other then what we are within the realm of immanence of Being. ’I am who I am.’

Authenticity is our personal relational experience to our Being just as it is. Liberation is experiencing my-self, my own Being-ness in and of itself just as I am. Our self is in relation to the outer world cannot be reduced to being outer other or simply to the interpersonal realm. So we have illuminated the experience of our self as the language of our embodiment of primordial Being as our own Being and the experience of our own Being as our own self. In a most profound way the embodiment of our two modes of knowing is the medium of our embodiment and medium of our experience of our ongoing continuity of self, our ongoing continuity of Being.

Liberation is the love of Being which is the love Being as our self, and the love of Being as the self of another. This is the love of Beings self-manifestation of Aham (I am) within my- self and within all the infinite manifestations is Aham. This self- liberation is beyond right and wrong, good and evil, better and best, and truth and falsity. This potential space of “I am” is always present, will always be present, and is self-liberation through this beatific experience of existence

Foreclosure and Split of Mind and Awareness

This splitting or dissociation between mind and awareness is the most fundamental splitting within a person. This is the splitting of the knowing of our mind and the knowing of our awareness. The natural integration of mind and awareness is our most important existential developmental task and the most important unfoldment of integration within us as human beings. Integrating our mind within our awareness field is the most foundational developmental task. Many people, many philosophers and many psychologists have not known this secret throughout the centuries. This is a great contribution of Dzogchen to the human experience of self-liberation.

For many people, there is a serious foreclosure between the knowing of mind and the knowing of awareness. The knowing of mind knows forms and duality. The knowing of awareness knows Being and non-duality. This foreclosure limits the person located in mind alone in their creative and personal life. Their life of self- liberation is not fully supported by the field of Being permeating their phenomena.

When a person is in awareness of awareness, the person can know directly their formless Being. This often happens easily in meditation praxis. The person can experience their Being-ness of their Being. The person can experience the bliss of pure Being. As the person leaves the meditational state of awareness, they leave being aware of awareness, and they leave the field of awareness, and their formless experience of Being-ness disappears. And then they are in mind alone as they go about their life in their mind, the field of Being is no longer experienced so directly so completely.

A person cannot experience their sense of luminous formlessness Being-full-ness without being in awareness. However, the person cannot experience their form without being in their mind. Mind knows form, knows beings and things. So the person cannot experience their Being of their form, the Being of their self without being in mind and awareness simultaneously. This being in mind and in awareness simultaneously is the medium of self- liberation. This is the true Mysterious Conjunctio.

The person cannot experience the form of their Being and the Being of their self without being in the integrated experience of mind and open

awareness. The integrated experience of mind and open awareness is the medium of self- liberation in and through our life circumstances and life events. This is the essence of existential Dzogchen. This is the essence of natural self- liberation.

Our Self is our experience of our Being as our self and our form of our self as Being. Self is the unified experience of our form as Being and our Being as the form of our self. This understanding reveals the nature of self. The experience of our self is the experience of formless being within form. The experience of our Formless being as our singular form. You and I are formless Being as a form. A human being is no-thingness within the form of thingness.

Summary Clarification: Absence of Self from Dzogchen view!

Clarification 1. The absence of self (anatman) is the absence of our knowing of our self, not the existential absence of our self as such. The absence of our self is the experiential absence of our Being. The absence of knowing our self is the absence of our knowing our Being. The absence of knowing our Being does not mean our Being does not exist. This absence of knowing our self as our Being, simply means our self as our Being is not being known by us as us.

To experience our personal form without our experience of the Being of our form is to experience the absence of self or Anatman. The experience of mind knowing form alone without the experience of awareness knowing Being results in the sense of the absence of self or anatman. This lack of experience of self does not mean that our self does not exist. It simply means by being in our mind alone, we may lack the direct experience of our Being as our self. We may also lack the experience of our self as our Being because we do not experience Being. It takes awareness to experience Being. It does not mean Being or self does not exist. This absence only means we are not knowing directly through awareness our sense of Being as our self. We are only knowing through our mind the form of our phenomena; this is Ma Rigpa. Early Buddhism suffered from Ma

Rigpa. Ma Rigpa means our knowing is incomplete. Our knowing is limited to the knowing of mind alone.

The mind knowing form without our awareness knowing Being results in the absence of our experience of self. Our mind may know form without our awareness knowing the Being of our form means the knowing of our awareness is not being utilized and is foreclosed. This foreclosure of awareness does not mean our self as our Being does not exist, only that we are not knowing the experience of our Being as our self. This is Ma Rigpa. This is an epistemological problem of Early Buddhism. Mind knowing form alone is incomplete. Mind alone does not know our Being. Mind alone knowing of self is mental and objectified thingness.

Clarification 2. To experience our awareness knowing Being, without the knowing of our mind's knowing forms of beings is another way of not knowing the experience of our embodied self. The knowing of awareness alone presents the experience of Being without the form of our being. There is no "Mineness."The experience of Being without the form of our being is Ma Rigpa. The experience of our awareness knowing Being without our mind knowing the form of our being is incomplete knowing.

This happens in many philosophical traditions where there is a dissociation of our knowing of awareness from our knowing of mind. Many non-dual traditions split the knowing of awareness and the knowing of mind. So there is only the knowing of Being, formless Being without the knowing of form. A tradition may also split the knowing of our mind from our knowing of awareness and the consequent knowing of our Being. One only experiences the knowing of mind which is the knowing of beings without the knowing of their Being. Many non-dual systems experience Ma Rigpa by the denying mind knowing form and phenomena. Thus in this context there is only awareness knowing Being. Awareness knowing Being alone is incomplete. Awareness knowing Being alone lacks knowing the form and the phenomena of my- self. This is a decisive understanding for religion and spirituality and religious spiritual praxis.

Integration of mind within awareness is necessary to know the presence of our self as the Being of our self.

SUMMARY

From the view of Dzogchen the absence of self is an epistemological problem of Early Buddhism. As the Dakini said to Dudjom Lingpa the great Dzogchen Master of Non Duality “You and I are indivisible”. There is a ‘You’ and there is an ‘I’ .The actuality of personal self- experience as our singular embodiment of Being manifests as our self. There is this convergence of our sense of Being and our sense of Self. And there is this actuality of our singular embodiment of Being as our personal experience of our self. And there is this actuality of our experience of the indivisibleness of our Being within us, as Being itself. So there is this sublime actuality of the duality of our experience of our self as a Being within the non-duality of our experience of the oneness of Being with another. There is a ‘You’ and there is an ‘I’ and there is oneness of our Being. Simultaneously there is our experience of our indivisible Being-ness within the Being-ness of each other. Through the Being-ness of Being we experience the Being-ness of our own self and we experience the Being-ness of the self of the other.

When we integrate the knowingness of our mind that knows beings within the knowingness of awareness that knows Being, we can experience the duality of beings within non-duality of Being. We can experience the non-duality of Being within the duality of beings. This experience is completely natural and is self-liberating.

The absence of self (anatman) teaching is a profoundly incomplete in our understanding of human existence. This incompleteness of knowing our self happens as we split our knowing of mind from our knowing of awareness. We split our knowing of beings from our knowing of Being. This existential experience of human Ma Rigpa goes far beyond early Buddhism. This existential experience of Ma Rigpa is ever present everywhere throughout time. This incompleteness is a source of suffering.

There are many wonderful text describing the Early Buddhist Teachings. I would especially like to mention the text Early Buddhist Teachings by Y.Karunadasa. Professor Karunadasa’s knowledge of Early Buddhism has been described as Unparralleled. I completely agree.

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